



**MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting:** BASG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Date & Time:** Monday 15 February 2022 at 5.00pm

**Location:** Virtual meeting via Zoom

**Present:** Paul Randall (PR) (Chair), Anne Sheddick (AS) (Vice Chair), Maggi Bull (MBL), Bernadette Allison (BA), Andrew Brown (AB), Gwyneth Langley (GL) (Secretary), Martin Baxter (MBR), Jo Pearce (JP), Angie Marchant (AM)

	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</b>	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Peter Lerner (PL) had sent apologies for absence.</p> <p>Angie Marchant (AM) was welcomed to the meeting as an observer. It was hoped that AM would join the committee. She has extensive experience as a governance professional which would be extremely valuable to the work of the association.</p> <p>The constitution and membership of the Executive Committee would be reviewed at the AGM later in the term.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Notification of Any Other Business</b>	
	<p>It was agreed that the following item would be discussed under Any Other Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BASG membership of the NGA</li> </ul> <p>PR updated the committee that work on plans for the AGM would take place over half term. JP suggested Paul Dix as a potential speaker. Paul Dix had written a book on behaviour management in schools which was proving influential. He was based locally and may be prepared to speak at the AGM. JP / AB would forward contact details to PR (<i>post meeting note: PR has contacted and is waiting to hear back</i>)</p>	<b>JP / AB</b>

3	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	Gwyneth Langley – BEP	
4	<b>Approval of Minutes from the Meeting Held on 17 January 2022 and Review of Actions</b>	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record and approved.</p> <p><u>Minute 5</u> – PR had spoken to Simon James regarding the BESST offer and raised all of the concerns noted at the BASG meeting on 17 January 2022. Simon James had confirmed that BC intended to continue with their plans to offer traded services and would be doing this on a standalone basis. PR had highlighted to Simon James concerns about perception of BASGs independence. PR would continue to progress the Memorandum of Understanding in advance of the next meeting of the School Governance Consultative Board</p> <p>JP highlighted the DfE direction of travel regarding academisation and that the LA currently had little interaction with the academy sector.</p>	PR
5	<b>Communications with Bucks Council</b>	
	<p>PL had met with Natasha How, newly appointed Governor Support Officer at BC, and had circulated notes to the group following this meeting.</p> <p>PR / AS had also met with Natasha How. This was a short meeting at which roles were outlined. Monthly update meetings had been arranged. It was noted that Natasha How had communicated her arrival in the latest BESST newsletter which was published on 14 February 2022.</p>	
6	<b>Local Networking Groups</b>	
	<p>Updates on the networking groups were given as follows:</p> <p><b>Aylesbury Group</b> – Monday 24 January 2022</p> <p>23 Chairs / Governors had attended this meeting. MBR gave an update on key discussion points, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Ofsted.</b> Two primary and two secondary school Chairs gave updates on their experiences of recent inspections. A list of questions posed at one of the inspections was circulated.</li> <li>- AS had explained the <b>impact of de-delegation.</b> MBR expressed some concern that there was still not a good understanding of the impact of this.</li> </ul>	PR

PR highlighted that a Bucks Chair had spoken at a recent Side by Side Conference about his experience of an Ofsted inspection. This had been useful. There was a recording of this that PR would circulate.

**Chesham, Amersham, Wendover and Great Missenden Group – Monday 14 February 2022.**

17 Chairs / Governors had attended this meeting. AB gave an update on key discussion points which included:

- **Ofsted.** A secondary school Chair shared experience of a Section 8 inspection in June 2021. AB also shared that a local primary school had managed to delay their inspection by 2 weeks due to the Headteacher being on paternity leave.
- **Sustainability and Climate Change.** This was growing in focus as a key topic for Boards.
- **Board Diversity.** The difficulty in recruiting governors from ethnic minority backgrounds was acknowledged. Some Boards had had success in recruiting younger governors, who were thought to bring an important perspective.
- **Ofsted Inspection of BC Children's Services.**
- **Side by Side Programme.** Some schools were benefitting from this, including those whose Headteachers were supporting others. This was a financial benefit to these schools. Schools looking for help were finding it more challenging. There was not always someone available to support.
- **Getting Back to Normal.** There was a mix of experience in schools relating to this stage of the pandemic. Staff shortages continued to be an issue in some cases.
- **Governor Meetings and Visits.** There was a mix of approaches. Many Boards were operating a hybrid approach and planned to do this going forwards.
- **Mental Health of Students.** This was a serious concern. Many students were finding the return to school challenging and struggling with this. Very limited or no support was available from BC. Parental anxieties were also affecting students and schools.

It was noted that some Boards were struggling to team build with many of their meetings still being held remotely and that retention of newer governors was a challenge. It was more difficult for new governors to engage in the life of schools with continuing restrictions on visits. Interaction with the children was a real miss.

AM highlighted that technology can have a real impact on the effectiveness of hybrid meetings and suggested a conference facility called The Owl as being effective.

**Wycombe and South Bucks (formerly Jordans) Group – Saturday 5 March 2022**

The group would meet on Saturday 5 March 2022.

	<p>It had been suggested that Natasha How might wish to become involved in networking groups as part of her remit. There was some concern about this. It was important that these groups remained independent. AS had suggested to Natasha How that she attends part of the networking group meeting as an invited guest.</p> <p>PR thanked everyone for organisation of or involvement with local Networking Groups, which were extremely valuable.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>BEP Update</b>	
	<p>GL updated the group on the BEP Chairs Strategic Briefing this term. This would take place on Friday 11 March 2022 and all Chairs or their representatives were welcome to attend. The key speakers this term would focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sustainability and Climate Change: The Greening of Schools</li> <li>- Ofsted : Themes from Recent Inspections</li> <li>- HR Update and Early Career Teacher Training</li> </ul> <p>GL would highlight the BASG AGM as part of this session if plans were progressed by this date.</p> <p>BEP continued to support numerous Governing Boards with processes.</p> <p>The challenges for governors undertaking investigations was discussed. It was thought that there was a need for further guidance and training on this. There was a number of professional investigation services available but these were very expensive for schools. It was agreed that this would be further discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p>AM expresses concern about the welfare of panel members and clerks involved in some processes. It was acknowledged that these processes could be very draining particular if a process involved the Headteacher and support was not always available. The welfare of Governing Boards was not always considered or a high priority.</p>	<p>Agenda – 31 March 2022</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>BASG Newsletter</b>	
	<p>PR / GL would discuss this.</p>	<b>PR / GL</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Buckinghamshire Challenge Group</b>	
	<p>The group had not met since the last meeting.</p> <p>MBR expressed concern about the messages that elected members might be hearing about the impact of the programme.</p> <p>It was discussed that a wider definition of disadvantaged may be needed. A number of organisations had suggested this. Two studies from NFER and EPI were highlighted, the links to these are below:</p>	

	<p><a href="https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/disadvantage-gaps-in-england/">https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/disadvantage-gaps-in-england/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/4762/nfer_investigating_the_changing_landsc_ape_of_pupil_disadvantage.pdf">https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/4762/nfer_investigating_the_changing_landsc_ape_of_pupil_disadvantage.pdf</a></p>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Side by Side Board</b>	
	<p>PR expressed frustration at the lack of planning involved in Side by Side Board meetings. Future meeting dates had now been fixed however.</p> <p>PR / MBL also expressed frustration at the nature of Board meetings. Whilst information and updates were presented there was little opportunity to debate and challenge.</p> <p>PR suggested that Councillor Patricia Birchley be invited to a BASG meeting later this year to update on Bucks Challenge and Side by Side.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Schools Forum</b>	
	<p>Schools Forum had last met on 18 January 2022. JP had attended this meeting. The following had been discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update on school budgets 22/23</li> <li>- Budget monitoring 21/22</li> <li>- Update on the DSG management plan</li> </ul> <p>JP considered that there had been limited challenge during the meeting.</p> <p>AS highlighted the importance of understanding what was happening with SEND funding. Some schools were still unclear on their funding for this financial year.</p> <p>JP offered to raise any questions at the next meeting and requested that they be sent to her.</p>	<b>All</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>School Governance Consultative Board</b>	
	<p>PR / AS / MBL would update PL in advance of the next meeting of the School Governance Consultative Board and highlight areas that may not be moving forwards.</p>	
<b>13</b>	<b>Children's and Education Select Committee</b>	
	<p>MBL gave an update on the meeting of the Select Committee that had taken place in January 2022.</p> <p>11 Councillors had attended the meeting. There was some assertive challenge to Officers.</p> <p>Bucks Challenge and Side by Side had been discussed as the BC response to the disadvantaged gap despite funding being cut.</p>	

	<p>There were a number of areas of discussion and questioning including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of young people that leave school at 16 without qualifications</li> <li>- Vulnerable pupils being electively home educated.</li> <li>- The impact of Covid on the social care system and family support. This had been significant. It was noted that work was taking place on consistency of social care. A Task and Finish Group was looking at this. MBL had become aware of a Headteacher Liaison Group who were also working on this and had put the groups in contact.</li> </ul> <p>Councillors had challenged the level of detail and granularity in the information presented by Officers at the committee. They had suggested that it was poorer quality than information presented in the past and did not give them sufficient information to understand and challenge.</p>	
<b>14</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
<b>14.1</b>	<p><b>BASG Membership of the NGA</b></p> <p>It was noted that the NGA had revised its pricing structure for membership and that associations were now able to join for £75. It was agreed that BASG would join on this basis. JP / PR would check the pricing structure and progress this.</p>	<b>JP / PR</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Dates / Times of Future Meetings</b>	
	<p>A date / time for the next meeting was agreed as follows:</p> <p>Thursday 31 March 2022 5pm</p>	

The meeting closed at 6.30pm